

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 05616 031905Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 W
-----031927Z 058657 /42
R 031045Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3798

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AMGT, EFIS, IV
SUBJECT: REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE

1. UNTIL ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO, THE REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE WAS ASSIGNED TO ABIDJAN. I UNDERSTAND THAT DURING NORMAN PEACE'S TENURE IN THAT POSITION IT WAS TRANSFERRED TO CASABLANCA, ALTHOUGH I AM NOT AWARE OF THE REASON FOR THE ORIGINAL TRANSFER. THE REASON MAY CONEIVABLY HAVE BEEN A QUESTION OF OFFICE SPACE, SINCE AT THAT TIME REDSO SHARED THE WORKING SPACE OF THE CHANCERY. THIS, AS YOU KNOW, IS NO LONGER A PROBLEM SINCE REDSO HAS SINCE MOVED INTO SEPARATE QUARTERS.

2. RECENTLY, WILLIAM FOLSOM, THE INCUMBENT FISHERIES ATTACHE IN CASABLANCA, VISITED ABIDJAN AND MENTIONED THAT CURRENT THINKING IN THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE(NMFS) IS THAT ABIDJAN IS A BETTER AND MORE LOGICAL LOCATION FOR THE REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE THAN CASABLANCA. I AM INCLINED TO AGREE WITH HIM IN VIEW OF ABIDJAN'S CENTRAL LOCATION WITH RESPECT TO THE AFRICAN FISHERIES GROUNDS, THE NUMBER OF THIRD-COUNTRY
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FISHERIES REPRESENTATIVES HERE ALREADY(KOREA, TAIWAN, POLAND, FRANCE AND SPAIN), AND THE ACT THAT BOTH CONTINENTAL SEAFOODS AND VAN CAMP OPERATE FROM ABIDJAN.

3. WHILE I AM VISCERALLY OPPOSED TO CREEPING ESCALATION OF THE ALREADY NUMEROUS US PRESENCE IN THE IVORY COAST --PARTICULARLY THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH HAVE LITTLE OR NO

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE IVORY COAST ITSELF AND USE ABIDJAN AS A PLACE TO HANG THEIR HATS--I AM INTERESTED IN INCREASING OUR CAPABILITY TO DEAL WITH SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO THE IVORIANS WHICH HAVE A DIRECT BEARING ON US-IVORIAN RELATIONS. FISHERIES IS CERTAINLY ONE OF THESE. THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT IS EXPANDING ITS OWN FISHING FLEET AND CLEARLY INTENDS TO DEVELOP ITS CAPABILITY TO FISH THE WEST AFRICAN COAST AND BEYOND. OUR EXTREMELY BUSY ECONOMIC SECTION SIMPLY DOES NOT HAVE THE TIME OR MANPOWER TO COVER ALL ASPECTS OF AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT FIELD OF ACTIVITY.

4. FOR THESE REASONS I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT THE EMBASSY WOULD RECEIVE ENOUGH DIRECT BENEFIT FROM THE PRESENCE OF A REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE HERE TO OFFSET THE PROBLEM OF LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND THE EVER-PRESENT RISK THAT THE IVORIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BRIDLE AT THE ADDITION OF ANOTHER US OFFICIAL WITH REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO OUR STAFF IN ABIDJAN.

5. BEFORE MAKING A FORMAL SUGGESTION THAT THE REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE BE TRANSFERRED BACK TO ABIDJAN FROM CASABLANCA, I WOULD HOWEVER FAVOR THE INFORMAL REACTION OF AF/EX TO SUCH A PROPOSAL, INCLUDING ANY INFORMATION YOU MAY HAVE ON THE REASONS FOR THE ORIGINAL TRANSFER OF THE POSITION TO CASABLANCA. STEARNS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LOBBYING, FISHERIES, ATTACHES, ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 03-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ABIDJA05616
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770198-0919
Format: TEL
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770695/aaaadfjv.tel
Line Count: 87
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 09eb4086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2296824
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REGIONAL FISHERIES ATTACHE
TAGS: AMGT, EFIS, IV, MO, (STEARNS, MONTEAGLE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/09eb4086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009